JOKER:
LAST LAUGH

SUPERMAN IN ACTION COMICS

784

KELLY
ROULEAU
ALQUIZA

49

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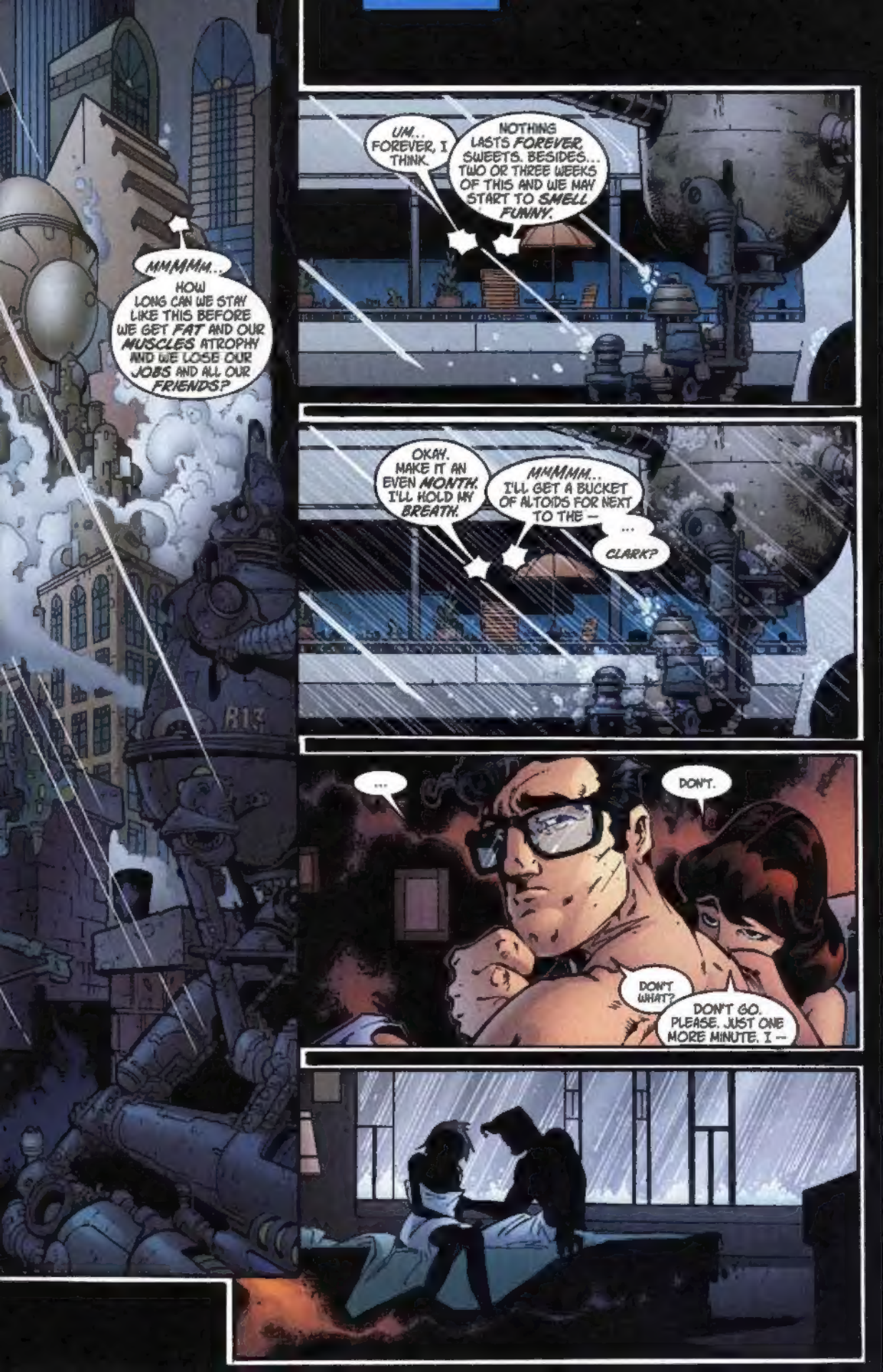
IN FUNNIEST DAY,
IN CRAZIEST NIGHT!


MMMMM... HOW LONG CAN WE STAY LIKE THIS BEFORE WE GET FAT AND OUR MUSCLES ATROPHY AND WE LOSE OUR JOBS AND ALL OUR FRIENDS?
UM... FOREVER, I THINK.
NOTHING LASTS FOREVER, SWEETS. BESIDES... TWO OR THREE WEEKS OF THIS AND WE MAY START TO SMELL FUNNY.
OKAY. MAKE IT AN EVEN MONTH. I'LL HOLD MY BREATH.
MMMMM... I'LL GET A BUCKET OF ALTOIDS FOR NEXT TO THE —
...
CLARK?
...
DON'T.
DON'T WHAT?
DON'T GO. PLEASE. JUST ONE MORE MINUTE. I —

LOIS, I...
IT'S THE JOKER, LOIS. I KNOW IT.
I MEAN, I COULD STAY IF IT WAS --
CLARK, I... I'M KIDDING. HEH. HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR, WHY DON'T YOU?
GO DO.
I'LL BE BACK AS FAST AS I CAN.
SPEEDING BULLET FAST?
FASTER.
I LOVE YOU, CLARK. YOU KNOW THAT?
JOKERS AND WARS AND EVERYTHING INCLUDED?
IT'S THE ONLY THING I KNOW WITH ALL MY HEART, LOIS.
KEEP MY SIDE WARM.
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
'BYE.
GOODBYE, CLARK.

OUCH. SHE NEVER ASKS ME TO STAY, AND I USUALLY DON'T FEEL LIKE SUCH A JERK FOR LEAVING, BUT --
SOMETHING IN HER VOICE. IT'S BEEN THERE SINCE THE WAR. SINCE THE FUNERAL FOR HER FATHER.
PAIN. SHE'S HURTING. HER FATHER'S DEAD AND --
-- AND PA CAME HOME. THAT MUST IMPACT HER ON SOME LEVEL. I KNOW IT MAKES ME FEEL GUILTY EVERY TIME I HUG MY DAD IN FRONT OF HER AND SHE LOOKS AWAY.
I'VE BEEN WHERE SHE IS. I CAN'T SAY THAT, NOT REALLY... BUT I HAVE...
THAT PERSONAL SORT OF HELL WHERE BEING AWAKE JUST SORT OF HURTS, BECAUSE DESPITE YOUR BEST EFFORTS...
...YOUR WORLD LOSES ALL MEANING --
REGIS IS UNDER MY SKIN! REGIS IS UNDER MY SKIN!
HAHAHA!
?

EMPEROR JOKER. IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN.
PLEASE, STOP. YOUR HUMAN FRAILTIES OFFEND THE NETHER REGIONS OF MY SOFT PALATE.
KNEELING! KNEEEEEELING!
THEY SCORNED ME! TATTOOED MY HINDQUARTERS WITH THEIR JEALOUS EYES -- BUT TODAY THE DREAM WILL BE MADE FLESH!! TODAY --
WHAT WAS I TALKING ABOUT?!
TAXI

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WHOSE MIND IS IT ANYWAY?
JOE KELLY
WHERE IS MY MILK?!
CHUM STEW
DUNCAN ROULEAU
ALQUIZA STUCKER & ROULEAU
MADAGASCAR
MOOSE BAUMANN
PLAIDMASTER
JAAAAANE! STOP THIS CRAZY THING!
COMICRAFT
75563
TOM PALMER JR
TOM TALMER RJ
EDDIE BERGANZA
CAP'N
SUPERMAN CREATED BY
JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
IF I WERE A TREE, I WOULD BE A LARD OAK OUTFITTED WITH .38 CALIBER BARRELS SO THAT I COULD SPREAD SHADE AND RAIN LEAD ON ALL THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD.
A FLYING BEARSKIN RUG ROBOT?! IS HE ON DRUGS?! AM I ON DRUGS? AM I A RUG?

HIS MIND RACES, AS IF BEING CHASED BY MEMORIES HE'S DESPERATELY TRIED TO KILL...
...BUT HE CANNOT RUN FAST ENOUGH.
HE REMEMBERS. ALL OF IT.
EMPEROR JOKER. WHEN A MADMAN BECAME A GOD AND THE WORLD HIS PLAYTHING.
LIKE BLOOD IN HIS MOUTH, HE TASTES THE HORROR AS IF HE WERE THERE... AND FOR A MOMENT, HE IS FRIGHTENED.
NO. THIS ISN'T THAT.
IT CAN'T BE.
FIRST THING'S FIRST. THE SMELL.
THESE PEOPLE ARE BEING POISONED SOMEHOW WITH A DERIVATIVE OF THE JOKER TOXIN.
THE RAIN.

JOKER'S BEEN ON THE LOOSE LATELY, DIRECTLY INJECTING HIS TOXIN INTO CRIMINALS.
I GUESS THAT WAS TOO SMALL FOR HIM.
THAT HAD REALLY BETTER WORK, BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE A RAINCLOUD FULL OF ANTIDOTE TO DROP ON THREE MILLION PEOPLE.
THE "CRAZY RAIN" DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO MY CITY, THOUGH. THAT... THAT'S POWER AT WORK.
IS IT POSSIBLE? DID THE JOKER SOMEHOW REMEMBER THE NIGHTMARE AND FIND A WAY TO REPEAT IT?
IF THE JOKER REMEMBERS WHAT HAPPENED... WHAT ABOUT --
SUPERMAN.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?
NICE TO SEE YOU TOO. HOW YOU HOLDING UP?
BEEN BETTER.
HAVE YOU MADE CONTACT WITH HIM YET?
JOKER? NO, TOO BUSY GETTING HIS GUNK OUT TO SEA —
...
WHAT? WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?
"SUPER-VISION." HNNH. GOOD THING I RUSHED OVER.
WHAT ARE YOU —
OH NO. NO WAY.
WAY.

GET YA FREAK ON! GET YA FREAK ONNN!
AHHHH, I HAVEN'T HAD THIS MUCH FUN SINCE THIRTY SECONDS AGO! I MEAN, THEY SAY THAT GREAT POWER CORRUPTS GREATLY...
...BUT ALL I GOT IS THE BUZZ OF A LIFETIME AND A HEAD FULL OF NC-17 IDEARRRRS!
ANYONE ELSE WANT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DROP A BUILDING OFF THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING?
GREEN LANTERN!
RED STOPLIGHT! CAR ACCIDENT! BLADDER SPLAYED ON THE DRIVE COLUMN!
YAY WORD ASSOCIATION! CAN WE DO DIRTY MAD LIBS NEXT --?
LANTERN, STOP AND LISTEN TO ME!
PEOPLE ARE GETTING HURT --
YEEEEK! HEEEEERO! I GOTTA MAKE MY BAD GUY ENTRANCE.

THAT GOOD-LOOKIN' SUPER-STUD YOU KNEW IS DEAD! (OR AT LEAST, HE'S IN LA LA LAND SOMEWHERE DREAMING OF SCOOBY SNACKS AND SPRING BREAK!)
CALL ME -- SINE-COSINE-ALAX!
SOHCAHTOA! SOHCAHTOA!
KYLE... I KNOW IT'S DIFFICULT TO FOCUS, BUT LOOK AROUND YOU. THIS ISN'T YOU. IT'S THE JOKER GAS
BUT I'M WEARING THE BLACK HAT. I'M THE BAD ONE. WHY DOES MY HEAD HURT?
AM I DREAMING YOU OR IS THE CAPITAL OF FRANCE UNDERPANTS? I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD.
I KNOW, PAL.
JUST PUT DOWN THE RING AND LET'S TALK
I LIKE CHEESE. WHERE'S MY DINNER?!
SHOOM
STUPID. NO TALKING. THIS IS NOT A TALKING SITUATION!
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT ME TO DO? KYLE'S NOT SOME MANIAC --
HE IS. HE'S A JOKER, AND IF HE REALIZES IT WITH THAT RING -- HE'S A GOD.
SO LISTEN TO ME UNLESS YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT THE WORLD WILL BE LIKE REMADE IN THE JOKER'S IMAGE

UH-UH! I'M IN CHARGE OF PROGRAMMING AT THIS STATION! TODAY ON THE DISEMBOWELMENT CHANNEL...
...THE NIGHT LIFE OF BATS -- AND THE OWLS WHO LOVE THEM WITH A NICE BERNAISE SAUCE!
NO... NOT AGAIN
GET AWAY FROM HIM!
JEEZ. WHAT'S UP WITH HIM? PRE-JUDGED AGAINST OWLS?
SUPERMAN!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WHAT? I WAS HELPING --
...
ENOUGH! I CANNOT ABIDE CRUELTY TO IMAGINARY ANIMALS.
YOU ARE THE LINKEY-LINK. GOODBYE.

BLINK
...
"SENT TO THE CORNFIELD." PERFECT. HE CAN TELEPORT NOW.
...
WHAT?
THAT WAS G.L. 15. LANTERN HURLS OBJECTS. REQUIRING FOCUS --
WHILE CONCENTRATING ON HIS TARGET, TARGET'S BACK-UP FINDS AN OPENING. THAT WAS YOU. I HAD THE "OWLS" LOCKED DOWN.
WE'VE PRACTICED THAT MANEUVER A THOUSAND TIMES IN THE WATCHTOWER. KYLE PROBABLY WANTED YOU TO DO IT, FOR PITY'S SAKE.
SOMETHING'S GOING ON WITH YOU.
I CAN'T CLOSE MY EYES. BECAUSE I SEE HIM AND IT... AND ME... PIECES AND PARTS... CAN'T CLOSE...
HE HAS KISSED DEATH COUNTLESS TIMES. SUCH MEMORIES CANNOT SIMPLY BE ERASED. THEY MUST BE EXCISED. TAKEN.
I KNOW WHAT YOU'D SAY IF YOU WERE LISTENING, BRUCE. BUT IT CAN'T END LIKE THIS. NOT FOR YOU..
AND ESPECIALLY NOT BECAUSE OF HIM.
IF YOU DIDN'T NOTICE, THINGS ARE A LITTLE OFF BALANCE RIGHT NOW. I WANT TO SAVE MY CITY AND KYLE --
YOU ARE THE SINGLE WORST LIAR I'VE EVER MET.

WHAT. IS. HAPPENING. HERE?
...
I'M... AFRAID. AFRAID OF WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IF WE CAN'T REASON WITH KYLE.
YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN.
I DIDN'T KEEP FILES ON HOW TO INCAPACITATE MEMBERS OF THE J.L.A. FOR WHEN MARTIAN MANHUNTER RUNS OUT OF CHOCOLATE.
IT'S NOT GOING TO COME TO THAT. HE CAME TO METROPOLIS BECAUSE PART OF HIM WANTS HELP --
OR HE'S HERE BECAUSE PART OF HIM KNOWS YOU WON'T KILL HIM.
HE'S NOT HAL, BRUCE.
I HAVE NO AGENDA HERE, CLARK. BESIDES THE OBVIOUS.
KYLE CAN SPLIT ATOMS WITH THAT RING. HE CAN TURN BLOOD MOLECULES TO GASOLINE. HE CAN STOP THE EARTH FROM SPINNING.
I NEED TO KNOW YOU WILL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO END THIS, OR THE JOKER WINS.
DAMN YOUR PAIN, BRUCE... WE NEED YOU TOO MUCH.. I NEED YOU..
I'M SORRY
TRUST ME, BRUCE... I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES.
AND THEN SOME.

DAILY PLANET
"YOU'D BETTER. IF WHAT I'VE OBSERVED IS CORRECT, WE'RE UP AGAINST SOMETHING VERY, VERY BAD.
"THE PRIORITY IS REACHING KYLE'S CONSCIOUSNESS, BENEATH THE EFFECTS OF THE CRAZY PAIN. FOLLOW MY LEAD, AND WE MIGHT PULL THIS OFF WITHOUT ANY LOSS OF LIFE."
WHAT ABOUT TURNING THEIR SKIN ON THE INSIDE? THAT COULD BE A *MOOT*.
WHO'S GONNA CLEAN *THAT* UP? AND THE *SMELL*?
HOW ABOUT RAINING *JETTAS*?
I'M A *DOMESTIC* CAR GUY MYSELF AND *BEETLES* WOULD BE FUNNIER.
DO YOU THINK THE RING CAN MAKE FLESH-EATING ROBOTS?
ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND — COMPANY, *BOSS*.
YAWN HAVE YOU EVER HAD THE FEELING THAT YOU MIGHT *SNEEZE* AND WHEN YOU DID, EVERYONE'S *MOLECULES* WOULD DISCONNECT AT THE SAME TIME AND THE AIR WOULD TURN TO *BLOOD* AND THE GROUND WOULD OPEN AND SWALLOW YOU WHOLE —?
KSSH!
ME *NEITHER*.
HE'S GETTING *FASTER*.
YOU SEE HIM?

UFFFT!
PWHAM
NOW THAT'S AN IDEA! I ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW HOW THIS WOULD TURN OUT!
I MEAN, YOU CAN LIFT A MOUNTAIN, BUT HE, A MERE MOUSE WHO IS MIGHTY STRONG, CAN LIFT AN ELEPHANT!
CONVERSELY, YOU'RE REAL, BUT HE'S A CARTOON.
WHO WOULD WIN? HOW DO THEY GET CREAM TO STAY IN A TWINKIE SNACK BOAT? WHO'S YOUR DADDY?!
YOU >KAFF< STUPID... PATHETIC MORON.
WH-WHAT? BAKING POWDER?
I KNEW I WAS RIGHT ABOUT YOU.
RIGHT ABOUT WH -- UFF!
OUCH-- SEND CHEESE
SKOOW
YOU'RE A LOSER.
OH, THIS IS A NOVEL ACT
I'M THE LOSER?

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY, BOY.
YOUR PREDECESSOR, HIS RING COULD DO ANYTHING TOO. BUT IT HAD A WEAKNESS...
...YELLOW.
WEAWWY? I TAUGHT I KNEWED DAT, BUT MAYBE I GOT HIM BY THE FORGETMERAY — OR I'M DUMB —
NO, YOU'RE NOT DUMB, BUT LIKE THE REAL GREEN LANTERN YOU'VE GOT A WEAKNESS, A FLAW —
YOU'RE YELLOW. YOU'RE A COWARD.
I AM THE REAL GREEN LANTERN...
ISN'T THAT WHY YOU CAME RUNNING TO METROPOLIS AFTER THE JOKER GOT THE DROP ON Y —HHNGH!
TO HIDE WHERE I WOULD PROTECT YOU?
I DON'T MIND TELLING YOU. YOU'RE BEING A REAL HERB, SUPERMAN.
SUPERMAN -- THIS WAS NOT THE PLAN --
I'M JUST TELLING THE TRUTH. IT'S WHAT I DO.
WHY DO YOU THINK WE KEEP YOU AROUND? IT'S TO WATCH YOU, SO WHEN YOU SCREW UP, WE CAN PICK UP THE PIECES.
LIKE WHEN YOUR GIRLFRIEND WAS KILLED? REMEMBER THAT STERLING MOMENT OF HEROISM?!
OH, NO, YOU DIDN'T

NNGH!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! DISENGAGE! DISENGAGE!
CHA KOWW
BATMAN!
NOW LOOK WHAT YOU MADE ME DO!
YOU MADE ME KILL BATMAN! YOU MADE ME!
WE ALL KNEW YOU'D FALL. WHY DO YOU THINK WE KEEP YOU SO CLOSE?
ALL THAT POWER AND WHAT DO YOU DO WITH IT?!
AND I AIN'T A COWARD!
I WALK IN THE LIGHT OF A MILLION GLORIOUS HOSTS AND DELIVER UNTO THEM MY JIGGINESS!
I DO THE GOD-MAN THING, AND I DO IT WITH STYLE!

WELL GO ON, BIG MAN! SHOW ME WHAT YOU CAN DO --
-- SHOW ME YOU'RE NOT A COWARD! COME ON!
KILL ME!
IF YOU INSIST!
I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU! I CAN DO ANYTHING!
I CAN KILL YOU!
I CAN KILL YOU!
JEEZE THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE
NOR IS IT NECESSARY. DISENGAGE, SUPERMAN.

UH... WHAT'S THAT?
YOU, "KYLE," THE REAL YOU, UNCONSCIOUS.
OH... THAT'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T SEE EVERY DAY... AND I TAKE IT YOU'RE NOT DEAD EITHER?
CORRECT.
TRIPPY.
BATMAN, THE CIVILIANS --?
SAFE. AS YOU PREDICTED, THE FOCUS OF HIS ENERGY WAS AIMED AT YOU. THE REST WAS STURM UND DRANG WITH NO REAL PUNCH --
EXCUSE ME? HELLO? WHY ARE YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT ME LIKE I'M NOT HERE?
BECAUSE YOU AREN'T, "KYLE" --
WHICH SHOULD BE APPARENT AS THE ANTIDOTE I JUST INJECTED GREEN LANTERN WITH KICKS IN --
AND HIS BRAIN OPERATIONS RETURN TO EQUILIBRIUM.
P
BUT... BUT I FEEL REAL... I --
BUT I STILL WANT TO PLAY... I --
POODLE.
EASY, LANTERN... IT'S OVER NOW.
SAYS YOU... FEEL LIKE I WENT FIFTY ROUNDS WITH -- WAS SUPERMAN A NERF TO ME?
I DIDN'T MEAN IT, KYLE. NOT A WORD OF IT. BATMAN REALIZED WE WERE FIGHTING ONE OF YOUR CONSTRUCTS --
RING ON THE LEFT HAND WAS A DEAD GIVEAWAY. IT WAS GENERATED BY THE RIGHT SIDE OF YOUR BRAIN, WHERE THE UNRESTRAINED ID LIVES --
IT'LL HEAL. JUST LISTEN, KYLE. I HAD TO GET YOUR FOCUS -- TURN IT AWAY FROM EVERYTHING ELSE WHILE BATMAN CLEARED THE AREA OF CIVILIANS.
WHAT I SAID... IT WAS JUST TO SHOCK YOUR CONSTRUCT -- I SWEAR IT.
Y-YOUR FACE... WHAT DID I DO TO YOUR FACE?
YOU'RE ONE OF THE BRAVEST, MOST WORTHY PEOPLE I KNOW TO WIELD THE POWER AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THAT RING.
I'M PROUD TO CALL YOU FRIEND AND FIGHT BESIDE YOU.
I KNOW YOU ARE, BUT WHAT AM I? HEH. THANKS, SUPERMAN.
WHAT DO YOU SAY WE KNOCK OFF THIS MUSHY STUFF AND GET TO CLEANING UP THE JOINT?
DAILY-PLANE

LATER...
...
THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE TO TELL ME? NOTHING MORE?
NO, BATMAN... THAT'S IT. THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN SO PROTECTIVE OF YOU TODAY. I THOUGHT... I THOUGHT IT WAS HAPPENING AGAIN.
HE MURDERED YOU... AGAIN AND AGAIN. AND EVEN THOUGH YOU SURVIVED... YOU... YOU WERE BROKEN, BRUCE. GONE.
THERE HAVE BEEN MANY TIMES I'VE SEEN YOU DO THINGS I'D CALL INSANE IN OTHER MEN, BUT THIS TIME...
...I COULDN'T LET THE JOKER BEAT YOU LIKE THAT. THE REST OF THE WORLD -- THE UNIVERSE -- HAD BEEN PUT BACK, BUT YOU --
SO YOU STOLE MY MEMORIES.
THE SPECTRE SAID IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE YOU.
YOU TAMPERED WITH MY MIND.
BRUCE --
YOU TAMPERED WITH MY MIND.
I -- YES. I TOOK YOUR MEMORIES... ALL THE PAIN, INTO ME.
YOU HAD NO RIGHT TO TAKE THAT FROM ME, CLARK.
WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO? LET YOU SIT A WRETCHED VEGETABLE?
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU'RE BETTER EQUIPPED TO HANDLE MY PAIN THAN I AM?!
PAIN IS MY WEAPON! MY ARMOR!
WHAT IS IT YOU ASKED ME BEFORE? HOW FAR WAS I WILLING TO GO TO STOP KYLE?
NOT AS FAR AS I WAS WILLING TO GO TO SAVE YOU.
YOU ARE THE MOST BRILLIANT MAN I HAVE EVER MET, BRUCE. I WAS NOT GOING TO LET THAT MONSTER DESTROY YOU THAT WAY... I JUST WASN'T.
I'M SORRY YOU DON'T SEE IT THAT WAY, BUT IF HITTING ME WILL HELP, I'LL MAKE SURE YOU DON'T BREAK YOUR HAND.

POW.
HSSSSSSF
?
KRA
KABOOM

KAFFE OW ACKE
KAFFE FEEL KOFFE BETTER?
...
WOULDN'T YOU HAVE DONE THE SAME, BRUCE? IF IT WAS YOU IN MY SHOES — EVEN IF YOU KNEW I'D BE ANGRY?
MAYBE... BUT THERE'S A DIFFERENCE.
I'VE BUILT A WORLD OUT OF PAIN. IT'S BEEN THE ONE CONSTANT IN MY LIFE SINCE A PAIR OF BULLETS TOOK MY PARENTS AWAY.
YOU SUFFER SURVIVOR'S GUILT FOR A PLANET YOU NEVER KNEW IN A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE LOVES YOU.
I THINK I QUALIFY AS THE AUTHORITY HERE.
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. MAYBE I WAS "BROKEN" -- I'LL NEVER KNOW, BUT IF WHAT YOU TOOK FROM ME IS AS BAD AS YOU SAY, I HAVE NEWS FOR YOU --
-- IT'S NOT GOING TO SIT QUIETLY IN A DARK CORNER OF YOUR MIND FOREVER. YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT.
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.
THE END
NEXT MONTH
ME AM FROMJIT!